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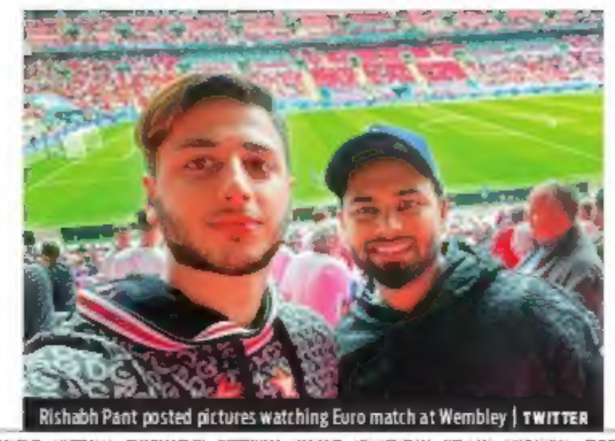

Rishabh Pant posted pictures watching Euro match at Wembley | TWITTER

**AHEAD OF ENG TESTS, COVID HITS TEAM INDIA**

Wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant and throwdown specialist Dayanand Garani tested positive for Covid-19, while three others were placed in isolation, as the coronavirus hit the Indian cricket team ahead of next month's Test series against England. Bowling coach Bharath Arun and reserve wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha were put in isolation along with standby opener Abhimanyu Easwaran. The team will undergo daily Covid tests from now on | P17

# SC CONCERN OVER RAMPANT MISUSE OF LAW ON SEDITION

## Wonders why there has been no govt bid to repeal it while many others were axed

KANU SARDA @ New Delhi

EXPRESSING concern over the rampant misuse of the colonial sedition law, the Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Centre why it has not got rid of the legislation when several other old laws have been repealed.

The observation came when a bench headed by Chief Justice of India N V Ramana was hearing a plea by retired Major-General S G Vombatkere, who challenged the Constitutional validity of Section 124 A (sedition) of the IPC on the grounds that it causes a chilling effect on free speech.

"Dispute is that it is a colonial law and was used by the British to suppress freedoms and used against Mahatma Gandhi and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Is this law still needed after 75 years of Independence?" Justice Ramana wondered.

Pointing towards its misuse, the CJI said, "If you see the history of charging under this section, the conviction rate is very low. The enormous power of this section can be compared to a carpenter being given a saw to make an item, (but) uses it to cut the entire forest instead of a tree. That's the effect of this provision." The CJI also clarified that he was not blaming any government but added that the concern was about the "misuse of the law and no accountability of the Executive".

According to Section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code, those who attempt to create hatred or contempt against the government shall be punished with imprisonment or fine or both. The offence is not bailable.

In 1962, the Supreme Court had upheld it in the Kedar Nath Yadav versus the State of Bihar case. "The government has taken out a lot of stale laws, I don't know why they have not looked into this," Justice Ramana told Attorney General K K Venugopal. The latter suggested that instead of repealing the section, parameters and guidelines could be laid down.

However, CJI Ramana once again emphasised the "gravity of the situation" and said "if a party does not want to hear the voice of the other party, they may use this type of law and implicate other people." The court then issued notice to the Centre and tagged it with other pending cases.

**SEDITION CASE COUNT** (2014 to 2019)

**559** Arrested

**337** Chargesheeted

**10** Convicted

**73** Acquitted/ Discharged

Source: NCRB

GST DUES

# Centre releases ₹8,542 crore to Karnataka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Union Finance Ministry on Thursday said it had released ₹75,000 crore to states under the 'back-to-back loan facility' in lieu of GST compensation. The loan facility is expected to compensate for losses in GST collections due to revenue shortages arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the economy.

Karnataka has received ₹8,542.17 crore as first instalment. The funds released on Thursday is in addition to regular GST compensation being released every two months out of actual cess collection to states. As per the decision taken in the 43rd GST Council meeting held in May, the Union Government will borrow ₹1.59 lakh crore and release it to states and UTs with legislature on a back-to-back basis.

The same principles that were applied to similar loans last fiscal year will be applied this year as well. The first instalment is nearly 50 per cent of the total shortfall of compensation for the year.

"The balance amount will be released in the second half of 2021-22 in steady instalments," a statement from the Finance Ministry said. Karnataka has been assured of ₹18,000 crore this fiscal year as part of back-to-back loans apart from the regular compensation from actual cess collection.

# State inks deals with 23 firms for ₹28K crore investments

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka Government on Thursday signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with 23 companies, including 12 multi-national companies, attracting investments of ₹28,000 crore. These projects are expected to generate close to 15,000 direct employment opportunities. Even amidst the pandemic, the state has managed to attract ₹1 lakh crore in investment since March 2020, announced Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa on Thursday.

Since the beginning of the pandemic last March, the State Government has cleared more than 520 industrial projects, including the MoUs signed on Thursday, with a total investment of ₹77,000 crore, spanning multiple sectors. Additionally, proposals and MoUs worth ₹23,000 crore have been submitted, thus taking the total investment to ₹1 lakh crore.

"This marks the strong commitment of investors, despite the challenging Covid-19 scenario, to select Karnataka as their destination for investment," Yediyurappa said during the signing of the MoU at the Invest Karnataka Conclave.

CONTINUED ON: P4

CABINET DECISION

**INVESTORS' MEET IN B'LURU NEXT YEAR**

The cabinet has decided to host the Global Investors' Meet in Bengaluru from February 9-11 next year. Themed 'Invest Karnataka-2022', it will be held at Palace Grounds, said Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Basavaraj Bommai. P4

**SPECIAL SCHEME TO INCENTIVISE $O_2$ MAKERS**

The cabinet approved a scheme to provide special incentives for oxygen manufacturers and associated enterprises in the state. "To increase capacity, if any entrepreneurs come forward, we will give them incentives," Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Basavaraj Bommai said. P4

# Govt ropes in private firms to upskill youth

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE State Government is partnering with eight private firms to impart job skills to the youth and a task force has been formed to create one crore jobs over the next five years.

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Thursday announced that the Karnataka Skill and Livelihood Task Force has been formed to look at ways to create job opportunities.

"The Task Force is expected to submit its report shortly," he said. Eight memoranda of understanding to train the youth were signed in the presence of the CM during the 'World Youth Skills Day' celebrations in Bengaluru.

CONTINUED ON: P4

FUEL METER

Here are the fuel prices as on July 15. The price of petrol has surpassed the ₹106 per litre-mark in a few districts of Karnataka

| DISTRICT | PETROL | DIESEL |
|---|---|---|
| Davanagere | 106.63 | 96.68 |
| Chitradurga | 106.61 | 96.67 |
| Ballari | 106.49 | 96.69 |
| Shivamogga | 106.33 | 96.45 |
| Tumakuru | 106.12 | 96.33 |
| Kolar | 105.11 | 95.42 |
| **Bengaluru** | **105.00** | **95.32** |
| Belagavi | 104.89 | 95.24 |
| Hassan | 104.79 | 95.01 |
| Hubballi | 104.75 | 95.11 |
| Kalaburagi | 104.75 | 95.11 |
| Mysuru | 104.51 | 94.86 |
| Mangaluru | 104.14 | 94.49 |

Price in rupees/ltr

# Substantial slack in economy even with 9.5 pc growth: RBI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

IT's said all's well that ends well. With the unpleasantness surrounding the second Covid wave declining, economic indicators are 'brightening' prospects. But, one may have to wait for that perfect ending. At least RBI believes so.

In its monthly bulletin released on Thursday, it noted that the gradual decline of infections and an aggressive vaccination push have brightened the near-term prospects for the economy. But, there will be a substantial slack in the economy and demand pressures may take some more time to become evident. This is notwithstanding the projected 9.5% GDP growth rate this fiscal. Aggregate demand is the cleanest guide to recovery, but as the central bank noted, consumption isn't at full-throttle.

"While several high frequency indicators of activity are recovering, a solid increase is aggregate demand is yet to take shape," it noted. Several mobility indicators shot up in June, so did attendance at workplaces, power consumption and digital transactions – all of which considered forerunners to a revival in business and consumer confidence. In fact, RBI's 27-factor nowcasting model estimated Q1 real GDP growth at 21%. Adjusted for Q1's 5.5% inflation, nominal growth is pegged at 17.5%.

While on the supply side, agricultural conditions are turning buoyant with the revival in the monsoon, but the recovery of manufacturing and services sectors has been interrupted by the second wave. Likewise, specific demand-supply mismatches too exist such as protein-rich food items, edible oils and pulses, which were being addressed by specific supply-side measures, according to the report. RBI also stressed inflation will persist at elevated levels for some months before easing in Q3 of FY22 when the kharif harvest reaches markets.

TO MEET BOSSES

# Yediyurappa heads to Delhi tomorrow

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

AMID on-and-off talk on the leadership issue in the state, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa's proposed trip to Delhi on Saturday has raised eyebrows.

Though Yediyurappa is scheduled to participate in a video conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with the CMs of five other states, at 11 am on Friday to discuss issues related to Covid-19 management, there was speculation about a personal meeting later in the day. However, the CM's travel plans for Friday do not indicate any such meeting.

Sources in the Chief Minister's Office said they have been seeking an appointment with the Prime Minister.

CONTINUED ON: P7

EXPRESS READ

**Wipro logs 35.6% net profit in June quarter**

Bengaluru: IT major Wipro on Thursday posted a 35.6 per cent jump in the June quarter consolidated net profit at ₹3,242.6 crore. P15

**JEE-Main 4th edition to be held on Aug 26-Sept 2**

New Delhi: The fourth edition of engineering entrance exam JEE (Main) has been postponed to August 26-September 2, the Centre said on Thursday.

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